

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-50. (Cancelled).

51. (Currently Amended) A method of diagnosing lung damage in a mammal, said method comprising:

~~screening for an increase in the level of SP-B in a body fluid of said mammal relative to a normal reference level,~~

~~wherein said identifying a mammal who~~ is asymptomatic to lung damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of lung damage in said mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures;

measuring a level of SP-B in a body fluid of the mammal;

comparing the measured level of SP-B to a normal reference level of SP-B; and

determining said mammal has lung damage if the measured level of SP-B is greater than the normal reference level of SP-B.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to lung damage.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein the clinical diagnosis of lung damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein said body fluid is blood.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein said body fluid is blood.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53, wherein said body fluid is blood.

57. (Currently Amended) A method of diagnosing alveolo-capillary membrane damage in a mammal, said method comprising:
- ~~screening for an increase in the level of SP-B in a body fluid of said mammal relative to a normal reference level, wherein said~~
 - identifying a mammal who is asymptomatic to alveolo-capillary membrane damage or wherein the clinical diagnosis of alveolo-capillary membrane damage in said mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures;
 - measuring a level of SP-B in a body fluid of the mammal;
 - comparing the measured level of SP-B to a normal reference level of SP-B; and
 - determining said mammal has alveolo-capillary membrane damage if the measured level of SP-B is greater than the normal reference level of SP-B.
58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein said mammal is asymptomatic to alveolo-capillary membrane damage.
59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein the clinical diagnosis of alveolo-capillary membrane damage in the mammal cannot otherwise be confirmed without the aid of one or more invasive procedures.
60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein said body fluid is blood.
61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 58, wherein said body fluid is blood.
62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 59, wherein said body fluid is blood.
63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 51, wherein the mammal is a human.
64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, wherein the mammal is a human.
- 65-68. (Cancelled).

69. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 57, further comprising determining said mammal has ~~wherein an increase in the level of SP-B relative to the normal reference level is~~ indicative of lung damage if the measured level of SP-B is greater than the normal reference level of SP-B.

70-72. (Cancelled).